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Much Ado about Nothing.

A

COMEDY.

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THEATRES-ROYAL

IN

G 4.015.59

Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden.

By SHAKESPEARE.

LONDON:

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M DCC LXXVIII.

Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

Don Pedro.	Barachio.
Leonato.	Conrade.
Don John.	Dogberry.
Claudio.	Verges.
Benedick.	Friar.
Balthazar.	Town Clerk.
Antonio.	Sexton.

WOMEN.

Hero.	Margaret.
Beatrice.	Ursula.

Messengers, Watch, and Attendants.

SCENE, Messina.

Much Ado about Nothing.

ACT I.

SCENE, *a Court before* Leonato's *Houſe.*

Enter Leonato, Hero, *and* Beatrice, *with a Meſſenger.*

Leon. I Learn, in this letter, that Don Pedro of Arragon comes this night to Meſſina.

Meſſ. He is very near, by this; he was not three leagues off, when I left him.

Leon. How many gentlemen have you loſt in this action?

Meſſ. But few of any ſort, and none of name.

Leon. A victory is twice itſelf, when the atchiever brings home full numbers. I find here, that Don Pedro hath beſtow'd much honour on a young Florentine, call'd Claudio.

Meſſ. Much deſerving on his part, and equally remembered by Don Pedro. He hath borne himſelf beyond the promiſe of his age, doing, in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion.

Leon. He hath an uncle here in Meſſina, will be very much glad of it.

Meſſ. I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him; even ſo much, that joy could not ſhew itſelf modeſt enough, without a badge of bitterneſs.

Leon. Did he break out into tears?

Meſſ. In great meaſure.

Leon. A kind overflow of kindneſs; there are no faces truer than thoſe that are ſo waſh'd.

Beat. I pray you, is Signior Montanto returned from the wars?

Meſſ. I know none of that name, lady; there was none ſuch in the army, of any ſort.

Leon. What is he that you aſk for, niece?

Hero. My couſin means Signior Benedick of Padua.

Meſſ. O, he's return'd, and as pleaſant as ever he was.

Beat. I pray you, how many hath he kill'd and eaten, in theſe wars? But how many hath he kill'd? for, indeed, I promis'd to eat all of his killing.

Leon. 'Faith, niece, you tax ſignior Benedick too much; but he'll be meet with you, I doubt it not.

Meſſ. He hath done good ſervice, lady, in theſe wars.

Beat. You had muſty victuals, and he hath help to eat them; he's a very valiant trencher-man, he hath an excellent ſtomach.

Meſſ. And a good ſoldier too, lady.

Beat. And a good ſoldier to a lady! But what is he to a lord?

Leon. You muſt not, Sir, miſtake my niece: there is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her; they never meet, but there's a ſkirmiſh between them.

Beat. Alas! he gets nothing by that. In our laſt conflict, four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the whole man govern'd with one. So that, if he have wit enough to keep himſelf warm, let him bear it for a difference between himſelf and his horſe, for it is all the wit that he hath left, to be known a reaſonable creature. Who is his companion, now? He hath every month a new ſworn brother.

Meſſ. Is it poſſible?

Beat. Very eaſily poſſible; he wears his faith but as the faſhion of his hat, it ever changes with the next block.

Meſſ. I ſee, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

Beat. No, if he were, I would burn my ſtudy. But, I pray you, who is his companion?

Meſſ. He is moſt in the company of the right noble Claudio.

Beat. O lord, he will hang upon him, like a diſeaſe; he is ſooner caught than the peſtilence, and the taker runs preſently mad. God help the noble Claudio; if he have caught the Benedick, it will coſt him a thouſand pound ere he be cur'd.

Leon. You'll ne'er run mad, niece.

Beat. No, not till a hot January. [*A flouriſh.*

Meſſ. Don Pedro is approach'd.

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, Balthazar, *and* Don John.

Pedro. Good ſignior Leonato, you are come to meet your trouble. The faſhion of the world is, to avoid coſt, and you encounter it.

Leon. Never came trouble to my houſe, in the likeneſs of your grace; for trouble being gone, comfort ſhould remain; but when you depart from me, ſorrow abides, and happineſs takes his leave.

Pedro. You embrace your charge moſt willingly. I think this is your daughter.

Leon. Her mother hath many times told me ſo.

Bene. Were you in doubt, that you aſk'd her?

Leon. Signior Benedick, no; for then you were a child.

Pedro. You have it full, Benedick; you may gueſs by this, what you are, being a man: truly the lady favours herſelf. Be happy, lady, for you are like an honourable father.

Bene. If ſignior Leonato be her father, ſhe would not have his head on her ſhoulders for all Meſſina, as like him as ſhe is. [*Prince and* Leon. *talk apart.*

Beat. I wonder that you will ſtill be talking, Signior Benedick; nobody marks you.

Bene. What, my dear lady diſdain! are you yet living?

Beat. Is it poſſible diſdain ſhould die, while ſhe hath ſuch meet food to feed it, as Signior Benedick? Courteſy itſelf muſt convert to diſdain, if you come in her preſence.

Bene. Then is courteſy a turn-coat: but it is certain, I am lov'd all ladies, only you excepted; and I would I could find in my heart, that I had not a hard heart, for truly, I love none.

Beat. A dear happineſs to women, they would elſe have been troubled with a pernicious ſuitor. I thank Heav'n, and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that. I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow, than a man ſwear he loves me.

Bene. Heav'n keep your ladyſhip ſtill in that mind, ſo ſome gentleman or other ſhall 'ſcape a predeſtinate ſcratch'd face.

Beat. Scratching could not make it worſe, if 'twere ſuch a one as yours.

Bene. Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

Beat. A bird of my tongue is better than a beaſt of yours.

Bene. I would my horſe had the ſpeed of your tongue, and ſo good a continuer. But keep your way, a God's name, I have done.

Beat. You always end with a jade's trick; I know you of old.

Pedro. [*Apart.*] This is the ſum of all. Leonato, Signior Claudio, and Signior Benedick; my dear friend Leonato hath invited you all. I tell him we ſhall ſtay here at the leaſt a month, and he heartily prays ſome occaſion may detain us longer. I dare ſwear he is no hypocrite, but prays from his heart.

Leon. If you ſwear, my lord, you ſhall not be forſworn. Let me bid you welcome, my lord; being reconciled to the prince, your brother, I owe you all duty.

John. I thank you; I am not of many words, but I thank you.

Leon. Pleaſe it your grace, lead on.

Pedro. Your hand, Leonato; we will go together.

[*Exeunt all, but* Benedick *and* Claudio.

Claud. Benedick!

Bene. What do you ſay, count?

Claud. Didſt thou note the daughter of Signior Leonato?

Bene. I noted her not, but I look'd on her.

Claud. Is ſhe not a modeſt young lady?

Bene. Do you queſtion me, as an honeſt man ſhould do, for my ſimple true judgment? or would you have me ſpeak after my cuſtom, as being a profeſſed tyrant to their ſex?

Claud. No. I pr'ythee ſpeak in ſober judgment.

Bene. Why, i'faith, methinks ſhe is too low for an high praiſe, too brown for a fair praiſe, and too little for a great praiſe; only this commendation I can afford her, that were ſhe other than ſhe is, ſhe were unhandſome; and being no other but as ſhe is, I do not like her.

Claud. Thou think'ſt I am in ſport. I pray thee, tell me truly how thou lik'ſt her?

Bene. Would you buy her, that you enquire after her?

Claud. Can the world buy ſuch a jewel?

Bene. Yea, and a caſe to put it into. But ſpeak you this with a ſad brow? or do you play the flouting jack? Come, in what key ſhall a man take you?

Claud. In mine eye, ſhe is the ſweeteſt lady that I ever look'd on.

Bene. I can ſee yet without ſpectacles, and I ſee no ſuch matter; there's her couſin, if ſhe were not poſſeſt with ſuch a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty, as the firſt of May doth the laſt of December. But I hope you have no intent to turn huſband, have you?

Claud. I would ſcarce truſt myſelf, though I had ſworn the contrary, if Hero would be my wife.

Bene. Is't come to this, in faith? Hath not the world one man, but he will wear his cap with ſuſpicion? Shall I never ſee a bachelor of threeſcore, again? O, fye! Go to, i'faith; if thou wilt needs thruſt thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it, and ſigh away Sundays. Look, Don Pedro is return'd to ſeek you.

Re-enter Don Pedro.

Pedro. What ſecret hath held you here, that you follow not to Leonato's houſe?

Bene. I would your grace would conſtrain me to tell.

Pedro. I charge thee, on thy allegiance.

Bene. You hear, Count Claudio, I can be ſecret as a dumb man, I would have you think ſo; but on my allegiance, mark you this; on my allegiance, he is in love. With whom? Now that is your grace's part. Mark how ſhort his anſwer is, with Hero, Leonato's ſhort daughter.

Claud. If this were ſo, ſo had he told it.

Bene. Like the old tale, my lord, it is not ſo, nor 'twas not ſo; and indeed, Heav'n forbid it ſhould be ſo.

Claud. If my paſſion change not ſhortly, Heav'n forbid it ſhould be otherwiſe.

Pedro. Amen, if you love her; for the lady is very well worthy.

Claud. You ſpeak this to fetch me in, my lord.

Pedro. By my troth, I ſpeak my thought.

Claud. And in faith, my lord, I ſpoke mine.

Bene. And by my two faiths and troths, my lord, I ſpeak mine.

Claud. That I love her, I feel.

Pedro. That ſhe is worthy, I know.

Bene. That I neither feel how ſhe ſhould be loved, nor know how ſhe ſhould be worthy, is the opinion that fire cannot melt out of me; I will die in it at the ſtake.

Pedro. Thou waſt ever an obſtinate heretic in the deſpight of beauty.

Claud. And never could maintain his part, but in the force of his will.

Bene. That a woman conceived me, I thank her; that ſhe brought me up, I likewiſe give her moſt humble thanks. But that I will have a recheat winded in my forehead, all women ſhall pardon me; becauſe I will not do them the wrong to miſtruſt any, I will do myſelf the right to truſt none; and the fine is, for the which I may go the finer, I will live a bachelor.

Pedro. I ſhall ſee thee, ere I die, look pale with love.

Bene. With anger, with ſickneſs, or with hunger, my lord, not with love. Prove, that ever I loſe more blood with love, than I will get again with drinking, pick out my eyes with a ballad-maker's pen, and hang me up at the door of a brothel-houſe, for the ſign of blind Cupid.

Pedro. Well, if ever thou doſt fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument.

Bene. If I do, hang me in a bottle, like a cat, and ſhoot at me.

Pedro. Well, as time ſhall try; in time the ſavage bull doth bear the yoke.

Bene. The ſavage bull may, but if ever the ſenſible Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull's horns, and ſet them in my forehead; and let me be vilely painted, and in ſuch great letters as they write, "Here is good horſe to hire," let them ſignify un-

der my sign, "Here you may see Benedick the marry'd man."

Pedro. Nay, if Cupid hath not spent all his quiver in Venice, thou wilt quake for this, shortly.

Bene. I look for an earthquake too, then.

Pedro. Well, you will temporise with the hours. In the mean-time, good Signior Benedick, repair to Leonato's, commend me to him, and tell him I will not fail him at supper, for indeed he hath made great preparation.

Bene. I have almost matter enough in me for such an embassage; and so I commit you.

Claud. To the tuition of Heav'n. From my house, if I had it.

Pedro. The sixth of July, your loving friend, Benedick.

Bene. Nay, mock not, mock not; the body of your discourse is sometimes guarded with fragments, and the guards are but slightly basted on, neither. Ere you flout old ends, any further, examine your conscience, and so I leave you. [*Exit.*

Claud. My liege, your highness may now do me good.

Pedro. My love is thine to teach, teach it but how,
And thou shalt see how apt it is to learn
Any hard lesson that may do thee good.

Claud. Hath Leonato any son, my lord?

Pedro. No child but Hero, she's his only heir.
Dost thou affect her, Claudio?

Claud. O, my lord,
When you went onward, on this ended action,
I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye,
That lik'd, but had a rougher task in hand,
Than to drive liking to the name of love.
But now I am return'd, and that war thoughts
Have left their places vacant; in their rooms
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
All prompting me how fair young Hero is,
Saying, I lik'd her ere I went to wars.

Pedro. Thou wilt be like a lover, presently,
And tire the hearer with a book of words.
If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it,
And I'll break with her. Was't not to this end,
That thou began'st to twist so fine a story?

Claud. How sweetly do you minister to love,
That know love's grief, by his complexion!
But left my liking might too sudden seem,
I would have salv'd it with a longer treatise.

Pedro. What need the bridge much broader than the flood?
The fairest grant is the necessity;
Look, what will serve, is fit. 'Tis once, thou lovest,
And I will fit thee with the remedy.
I know we shall have revelling, to-night;
I will assume thy part in some disguise,
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio,
And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart,
And take her hearing prisoner with the force,
And strong encounter of my amorous tale;
Then after to her father will I break,
And the conclusion is, she shall be thine.
In practice let us put it, presently. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Don John *and* Conrade.

Conr. What the good-jer, my lord? Why are you thus out of measure sad?

John. There is no measure in the occasion that breeds it, therefore the sadness is without limit.

Conr. You should hear reason.

John. And when I have heard it, what blessing bringeth it?

Conr. If not a present remedy, yet a patient sufferance.

John. I wonder that thou (being, as thou say'st thou art, born under Saturn) goest about to apply a moral medicine, to a mortifying mischief. I cannot hide what I am: I must be sad, when I have cause, and smile at no man's jests; eat when I have a stomach, and wait for no man's leisure; sleep when I am drowsy, and tend on no man's business; laugh when I am merry, and claw no man in his humour.

Conr. Yea, but you must not make the full show of this, till you may do it without controulment. You have, of late, stood out against your brother, and he hath ta'en you newly into his grace, where it is impossible you should take root, but by the fair weather that you make yourself; it is needful that you frame the season for your own harvest.

John. I had rather be a canker in a hedge, than a rose by his grace; and it better fits my blood to be disdain'd of all, than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any. In this (though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man) it must not be deny'd but I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted with a muzzel, and infranchised with a clog, therefore, I have decreed not to sing in my cage. If I had my mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking. In the meantime, let me be that I am, and seek not to alter me.

Conr. Can you make no use of your discontent?

John. I will make all use of it, for I use it only.—Who comes here?—What news, Borachio?

Enter Borachio.

Bora. I come yonder, from a great supper; the prince, your brother, is royally entertain'd by Leonato; and I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

John. Will it serve for any model to build mischief on? What is he, for a fool, that betroths himself to unquietness?

Bora. Marry, it is your brother's right-hand.

John. Who, the most exquisite Claudio?

Bora. Even he.

John. A proper squire. And who, and who? Which way looks he?

Bora. Marry, on Hero, the daughter, and heir of Leonato.

John. A very forward March chick! Come, let us thither, this may prove food to my displeasure. That young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow; if I can cross him, any way, I bless myself, every way.—You are both sure, and will assist me.

Conr. To the death, my lord.

John. Let us to the great supper, their chear is the greater that I am subdu'd: would the cook were of my mind. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE, *a grand Hall in* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Leonato *and* Antonio.

Leon. HOW came you to this?

Ant. I tell you, the prince, and Count Claudio,
Walking before supper in the thick pleach'd
Alley of the orchard, were overheard by a
Man of mine. It was agreed upon, that the prince should in a dance, woo Hero, as for himself; and having obtain'd her, give her to Count Claudio.

Leon. Hath the fellow any wit who told you this?

Ant. A good sharp fellow. I will send for him, and you shall question him yourself.

Leon. No, no, we will hold it as a dream, till it appear itself.—But do you acquaint my daughter withal, that she may be better prepar'd for her answer, if peradventure this be true.—Here she comes.

Enter Hero *and* Beatrice.

Leon. Was not Count John here, at supper?

Ant. I saw him not.

Beat. How tartly that gentleman looks! I can never see him, but I am heart-burn'd an hour after.

Hero. He is of a very melancholy disposition.

Beat. He were an excellent man that were made just in the mid-way, between him and Benedick; the one is too like an image, and says nothing; and the other too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling.

Leon. Then half Signior Benedick's tongue, in Count John's mouth, and half Count John's melancholy, in Signior Benedick's face———

Beat. With a good leg, and a good foot, uncle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world———if he could get her good-will.

Leon. By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

Beat. For that blessing I am at Heaven, upon my knees, every morning and evening. Lord, I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face, I had rather lay in woollen.

Leon. You may light upon a husband that hath no beard.

Beat. What should I do with him? dress him in my apparel, and make him my waiting gentlewoman? He that hath a beard, is more than a youth, and he that hath no beard, is less than a man; and he that is more than a youth, is not fit for me; and he that is less than a man, I am not fit for him; therefore, I will even take sixpence in earnest of the bearherd, and lead his apes into hell.

Leon. Well then, get you thither.

Beat. No, but to the gate; and there will the devil meet me, like an old cuckold, with his horns on his head, and say, Get you to heaven, Beatrice, get you to heaven, here's no place for you maids; so deliver I up my apes, and away to St. Peter, for the heavens, where the bachelors sit, and there live we as merry as the day is long.

Ant. Well, niece, I trust you will be rul'd by your father. [*To* Hero.

Beat. Yes, faith, it is my cousin's duty to make curt'sy, and say, As it pleases you; but yet, for all that, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another curt'sy, and say, Father, as it pleases me.

Leon. Well, niece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

Beat. Not till men are made of some other metal than earth; would it not grieve a woman to be overmaster'd with a piece of valiant dust? to make account of her life to a clod of wayward marle? No, uncle, I'll none. Adam's sons are my brethren, and, truly, I hold it a sin to match in my kindred.

Leon. Daughter, remember what I told you; if the prince do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer.

Beat. The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not woo'd in good time; if the prince be too importunate, tell him there is measure in every thing, and so dance out the answer: for hear me, Hero, wooing, wedding, and repenting, is a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque-pace; the first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig, and full as fantastical; the wedding mannerly-modest, as a measure, full of state and ancientry; and then comes repentance, and, with his bad legs, falls into the cinque-pace, faster and faster, till he sinks into his grave.

Leon. Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.

Beat. I have a good eye, uncle; I can see a church by day-light. [*Music plays.*

Leon. The revellers are entering, brother; make good room. [*Music again.*

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, Balthazar, *and others, in Masquerade.*

Pedro. Lady, will you walk away with your friend?

Hero. So you walk softly, and look sweetly, and say nothing, I am yours for the walk, and especially when I walk away.

Pedro. With me in your company?

Hero. I may say so, when I please.

Pedro. And when please you to say so?

Hero. When I like your favour; for Heaven defend the lute should be like the case.

Pedro. My visor is Philemon's roof, within the house is Jove.

Hero. Why, then, your visor should be thatch'd.

Pedro. Speak low, if you speak love.

Balth. Well, I would you did like me.

Marg. So would not I, for your own sake, for I have many ill qualities.

Balth. Which is one?

Marg. I say my prayers aloud.

Balth. I love you the better, the hearers may cry, Amen.

Marg. Luck match me with a good dancer!

Balth. Amen.

Marg. And keep him out of my sight when the dance is done: answer, clerk.

Balth. No more words; the clerk is answer'd.

[*A dance by the Masqueraders.*

Beat. Will you not tell me who told you so?

Bene. No, you shall pardon me.

Beat. Nor will you not tell me who you are?

Bene. Not now.

Beat. That I was disdainful, and that I had my good wit out of the hundred merry tales——well, this was Signior Benedick that said so.

Bene. What's he?

Beat. I am sure you know him well enough.

Bene. Not I, believe me.

Beat. Did he never make you laugh?

Bene. I pray you, what is he?

Beat. Why, he is the prince's jester; a very dull fool; his only gift is in devising impossible slanders: none but libertines delight in him, and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villainy; for he both pleases men, and angers them; and then they laugh at him, and beat him; I am sure he is in the fleet, I would he had boarded me.

Bene. When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you say.

Beat. Do, do; he'll but break a comparison or two on me, which peradventure, not mark'd or not laugh'd at, strikes him into melancholy, and then there's a partridge wing saved; for the fool will eat no supper that night. We must follow the leaders.

Bene. In every good thing.

Beat. Nay, if they lead to any ill, I will leave them at the next turning. [*Exeunt.*

Manent Don John, Claudio, *and* Borachio.

John. Now then for a trick of contrivance. Sure my brother is amorous on Hero, and hath withdrawn her father, to break with him about it; the ladies follow her, and but one visor remains.

Bor. And that is Claudio; I know him by his bearing.

John. Are you not Signior Benedick?

Claud. You know me well, I am he.

John. Signior, you are very near my brother in his love, he is enamour'd on Hero; I pray you, dissuade him from her, she is no equal for his birth; you may do the part of an honest man in it.

Claud. How know you he loves her?

John. I heard him swear his affection.

Bor. So did I, too; and he swore he would marry her to-night.

John. Come, let us to the banquet.

[*Exeunt* John *and* Borachio.

Claud. Thus answer I in name of Benedick,
But hear this ill news with the ears of Claudio.
'Tis certain so—the prince woos for himself.
Friendship is constant, in all other things,
Save in the office and affairs of love;
Therefore, all hearts in love, use your own tongues,
Let every eye negotiate for itself,
And trust no agent; beauty is a witch,
Against whose charms faith melted into blood.
This is an accident of hourly proof,
Which I mistrusted not.—Farewel, then, Hero!

Enter Benedick.

Bene. Count Claudio?

Claud. The same.

Bene. Come, will you go with me?

Claud. Whither?

Bene. Even to the next willow, about your own business, Count. What fashion will you wear the garland of? about your neck, like an usurer's chain? or under your arm, like a lieutenant's scarf? you must wear it one way, for the prince hath got your Hero.

Claud. I wish him joy of her.

Bene. Why that's spoken like an honest drover; so they sell bullocks: but did you think the prince would have served you thus?

Claud. I pray you, leave me.

Bene. Nay, now you strike like the blind man; 'twas the boy that stole your meat, and you'll beat the post.

Claud. If it will not be, I'll leave you. [*Exit*

Bene. Alas, poor hurt fowl! now will he creep into sedges. But that my Lady Beatrice should know me, and not know me! the prince's fool! ha! it may be I go under that title, because I am merry; yea, but so I am apt to do myself wrong: I am not so reputed. It is the base (tho' bitter) disposition of Beatrice, that puts the world into her person, and so gives me out; well, I'll be reveng'd as I may.

Enter Don Pedro.

Pedro. Now, Signior, where's the Count? Did you see him?

Bene. Troth, my lord, I have play'd the part of Lady Fame. I found him here, as melancholy as a lodge in a warren. I told him (and, I think, told him true) that your grace had got the will of this young lady; and I offer'd him my company to a willow-tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken, or to bind him a rod, as being worthy to be whipt.

Pedro. To be whipt! What's his fault?

Bene. The flat transgression of a school-boy; who, being overjoy'd with finding a bird's nest, shews it his companion, and he steals it.

Pedro. Wilt thou make a trust a transgression? the transgression is in the stealer.

Bene. Yet it had not been amiss the rod had been made, and the garland too; for the garland he might have worn himself, and the rod he might have bestow'd on you, who (as I take it) have stol'n his bird's nest.

Pedro. I will but teach them to sing, and restore them to the owner.

Bene. If their singing answer your saying, by my faith you say honestly.

Pedro. The Lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you; the gentleman that danc'd with her, told her she's much wrong'd by you.

Bene. O, she misus'd me, past the indurance of a block; an oak, but with one green leaf on it, would have answer'd her; my very visor began to assume life, and scold with her! She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the prince's jester, and that I was duller than a great thaw; huddling jest upon jest, with such impetuous conveyance upon me, that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me; she speaks poniards, and every word stabs; if her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no living near her, she would infect to the north-star; I would not marry her, though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him, before he transgress'd; she would have made Hercules have turn'd the spit, yea and have cleft his club to make the fire, too. I would to Heaven some scholar would conjure her; for certainly while she is here, a man may live as quiet in hell, as in a sanctuary; and people sin upon purpose, because they would go thither; so, indeed, all disquiet, horror, and perturbation follow her.

Enter Claudio, Beatrice, Leonato, *and* Hero.

Pedro. Look, here she comes.

Bene. Will your grace command me any service to the world's end? I will go on the slightest errand now, to the Antipodes, that you can devise to send me on; I will fetch you a tooth-picker from the farthest inch of Asia? bring you the length of Prester John's foot; fetch you a hair of the great Cham's beard; do you any embassage to the pigmies; rather than hold three words conference with this harpy; you have no employment for me?

Pedro. None, but to desire your good company.

Bene. O lord, Sir, here's a dish I love not. I cannot endure this lady's tongue. [*Exit.*

Pedro. Come, lady, come, you have lost the heart of Signior Benedick. You have put him down, lady; you have put him down.

Beat. So I would not he should do me, my lord, lest I should prove the mother of fools. I have brought Count Claudio, whom you sent me to seek.

Pedro. Why, how now, Count, wherefore are you sad?

Claud. Not sad, my lord.

Pedro. How then? sick?

Claud. Neither, my lord.

Beat. The Count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well; but civil, Count, civil as an orange, and something of its jealous complexion.

Pedro. I'faith, lady, I think your blazon to be true; though I'll be sworn, if he be so, his conceit is false.—Here, Claudio, I have wooed in thy name, and fair Hero is won; I have broke with her father, and his good-will obtained; name the day of marriage, and Heav'n give thee joy.

Leon. Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes; his grace has made the match, and all grace say amen to it.

Beat. Speak, Count, 'tis your cue.

Claud. Silence is the perfectest herald of joy; I were but little happy, if I could say how much. Lady, as you are mine, I am yours; I give away myself for you, and doat upon the exchange.

Beat. Speak, cousin, or (if you cannot) stop his mouth with a kiss, and let not him speak, neither.

Pedro. In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

Beat. Yea, my lord, I thank it, poor fool, it keeps on the windy side of care: my cousin tells him in his ear, that he is in her heart.

Claud. And so she doth, cousin,

Beat. Good Lord, for alliance! Thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am sun-burn'd; I may sit in a corner, and cry, Heigh ho! for a husband.

Pedro. Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

Beat. I would rather have one of your father's getting: hath your grace ne'er a brother like you? Your father got excellent husbands, if a maid could come by them.

Pedro. Will you have me, lady?

Beat. No, my lord, unless I might have another for working-days; your grace is too costly to wear every day: but I beseech your grace pardon me, I was born to speak all mirth, and no matter.

Pedro. Your silence most offends me, and to be merry best becomes you; for out of question you were born in a merry hour.

Beat. No, sure, my lord, my mother cry'd; but then there was a star danc'd, and under that I was born.—Cousins, Heav'n give you joy!

Leon. Niece, will you look to those things I told you of?

Beat. I cry you mercy, uncle: by your grace's pardon. [*Exit* Beatrice.

Pedro. By my troth, a pleasant-spirited lady.—Count Claudio, when mean you to go to church?

Claud. To-morrow, my lord; time goes on crutches till love have all its rites.

Leon. Not till Monday, my dear son, and a time too brief too, to have all things answer my mind.

Pedro. Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing; but I warrant thee, Claudio, the time shall not go dully by us. I will, in the interim, undertake one of Hercules's labours, which is to bring Signior Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection, the one with the other; I would fain have it a match, and I doubt not to fashion it, if you three will but minister such assistance as I shall give you direction.

Leon. My lord, I am for you, though it cost me ten nights watchings.

Claud. And I, my lord.

Pedro. And you too, gentle Hero?

Hero. I will do any modest office, my lord, to help my cousin to a good husband.

Pedro. And Benedick is not the unhopefullest husband that I know; thus far I can praise him, he is of a noble strain, of approv'd valour, and confirm'd honesty. I will teach you how to humour your cousin, that she shall fall in love with Benedick; and I, with your two helps, will so practise on Benedick, that, in despight of his quick wit, and his queasy stomach, he shall fall in love with Beatrice: if we can do this, Cupid is no longer an archer, his glory shall be ours. Go in with me, and I will tell you my drift. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Don John *and* Borachio.

John. Is it so, the Count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato?

Bora. Yea, my lord; but I can cross it.

John. Any bar, any cross, any impediment, will be medicinable to me; I am sick in displeasure to him, and whatsoever comes athwart his affection, ranges evenly with mine. How canst thou cross his marriage?

Bora. Not honestly, my lord; but so covertly, that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

John. Shew me briefly how.

Bora. I think I told your lordship, a year since, how much I am in the favour of Margaret, the waiting gentlewoman to Hero.

John. I remember.

Bora. I can, at any unseasonable instant of the night, appoint her to look out at her lady's chamber-window.

John. What life is in that, to be the death of this marriage?

Bora. The poison of that lies in you to temper; go you to the prince, your brother, spare not to tell him, that he hath wrong'd his honour, in marrying the renown'd Claudio, (whose estimation do you mightily hold up) to a contaminated stale, such a one as Hero.

John. What proof shall I make of that?

Bora. Proof enough to misuse the prince, to vex Claudio, to undo Hero, to kill Leonato; look you for any other issue?

John. Only to despight them, I will endeavour any thing.

Bora. Go, then, find me a meet hour to draw Don Pedro, and the Count Claudio, alone; tell them that you know Hero loves me; and in a kind of zeal, both to the prince and Claudio, as in love of your brother's honour, who hath made this match, (and his friend's reputation, who is thus like to be cozen'd with the semblance of a maid) that you have discover'd thus. They will hardly believe this, without trial: offer them instances, which shall bear no less likelihood, than to see me at her chamber-window, hear me call Margaret, Hero; hear Margaret term me Borachio; and bring them to see this, the very night before the intended wedding; for in the mean time I will so fashion the matter, that Hero shall be absent, and there shall appear such seeming proofs of Hero's disloyalty, that jealousy shall be call'd assurance, and all the preparation overthrown.

John. Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will put it in practice: be cunning in the working of this, and thy fee is a thousand ducats.

Bora. Be thou constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

John. I will presently go learn their day of marriage. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE, Leonato's *Garden.*

Enter Benedick.

Bene. I do much wonder, that one man seeing how much another man is a fool, when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he has laught at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn, by falling in love! and such a man is Claudio. I have known when there was no musick with him, but the drum and the fife, and now had he rather hear the tabor and the pipe: I have known when he would have walk'd ten mile afoot, to see a good armour; and now will he lie ten nights awake, carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain, and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier, and now he's turn'd orthographer, his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes. May I be so converted, and see with these eyes? I cannot tell; I think not. I will not be sworn, but love may transform me to an oyster; but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool; one woman is fair, yet I am well; another is wise, yet I am well; another virtuous, yet I am well. But till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain; wise, or I'll none; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her; fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not near me; noble, or not I; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please Heav'n. Ha! the prince

and Monſieur Love: I will hide me in the arbour.
[*Goes into the barbour.*

Enter Don Pedro, Leonato, Claudio, *and* Balthaſar.

Pedro. Come, ſhall we hear this muſick?

Claud. Yea, my good lord; how ſtill the evening is!
As hush'd on purpoſe to grace harmony.

Pedro. See you where Benedick hath hid himſelf?
Come, Balthaſar, we'll hear that ſong again.

Balth. O good my lord, tax not ſo bad a voice,
To ſlander muſick any more than once.

Pedro. It is the witneſs ſtill of excellency,
To put a ſtrange face on his own perfection;
I pray thee ſing, and let me woo no more.

Balth. I will, my lord.

Bene. Now for a divine air; how will they be raviſh'd! Is it not ſtrange that ſheep's guts ſhould hale ſouls out of men's bodies? Well, a horn for my money, when all's done.

SONG.

Sigh no more, ladies, ſigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever;
One foot in ſea, and one on ſhore,
To one thing conſtant never.
Then ſigh not ſo, but let them go,
And be you blithe and merry,
Converting all your ſounds of woe
Into hey down derry.
Sing no more ditties, ſing no more,
Nor be you dull or whining;
Men have been falſe, and will be ſo
While love-ſick maids are pining.
Then ſigh not ſo, &c.

Pedro. By my troth, a good ſong.

Balth. And an ill ſinger, my lord.

Bene. If he had been a dog that ſhou'd have howl'd thus, they would have hang'd him, and I pray Heav'n his bad voice bode no miſchief; I had as lief have heard the night-raven.

Pedro. Doſt thou hear, Balthaſar? I pray thee get us ſome excellent muſick; for to-morrow we would have it at the lady Hero's chamber-window.

Balth. The beſt I can, my lord. [*Exit.* Balthaſar.

Pedro. Do ſo; farewel. Come hither, Leonato! what was it you told me of, to-day, that your niece Beatrice was in love with Signior Benedick?

Bene. How's this?

Claud. O, ay, ſtalk on; ſtalk on, the fowl ſits. I did never think that lady would have loved any man.

Leon. No, nor I neither; but moſt wonderful, that ſhe ſhould ſo doat on Signior Benedick, whom ſhe hath, in all outward behaviour, ſeem'd ever to abhor.

Bene. Is't poſſible! ſits the wind in that corner!

Leon. By my troth, my lord, I cannot tell what to think of it; but that ſhe loves him with an enraged affection, it is paſt the infinite of thought.

Pedro. May be ſhe doth but counterfeit.

Claud. Faith, like enough.

Leon. Counterfeit! there was never counterfeit of paſſion came ſo near the life of paſſion as ſhe diſcovers it.

Pedro. Why, what effects of paſſion ſhews ſhe?

Claud. Bait the hook well, the fiſh will bite.

Leon. What effect, my lord? ſhe will ſit you—you heard my daughter tell you how.

Claud. She did, indeed.

Pedro. How, how, I pray you? you amaze me. I would have thought her ſpirit had been invincible againſt all aſſaults of affection.

Leon. I would have ſworn it had, my lord, eſpecially againſt Benedick.

Bene. I ſhould think this a gull, but that the white-bearded fellow ſpeaks it. Knavery cannot ſure hide himſelf in ſuch reverence.

Claud. He hath ta'en th' infection. Hold it up.

Pedro. Hath ſhe made her affection known to Benedick?

Leon. No, and ſwears ſhe never will; that's her torment.

Bene. So, ſo!

Leon. My daughter ſays, the extaſy hath ſo much overborne her, that ſhe is ſometimes afraid ſhe will do deſperate outrage to herſelf.

Pedro. It were good that Benedick knew of it, by ſome other, if ſhe will not diſcover it. I pray you, tell Benedick of it, and hear what he will ſay.

Leon. Were it good, think you?

Claud. 'Tis very poſſible he'll ſcorn it; for the man, as you know all, hath a contemptible ſpirit.

Bene. Very well!

Claud. Never tell him, my lord; let her wear it out with good counſel.

Leon. Nay, that's impoſſible; ſhe may wear her heart out firſt.

Pedro. Well, we will hear farther of it by your daughter: let it cool the while. I love Benedick well, and I could wiſh, he would modeſtly examine himſelf, to ſee how much he is unworthy to have ſo good a lady.

Leon. My lord, will you walk? Dinner is ready.

Claud. If he do not doat on her, upon this, I will never truſt my expectation.

Pedro. Let there be the ſame net ſpread for her, and that muſt your daughter and her gentlewomen carry; the ſport will be, when each holds an opinion of the other's dotage, and no ſuch matter. That's the ſcene that I would ſee. Let us ſend her to call him in to dinner. [*Exeunt.*

Bene. This can be no trick; the conference was ſadly born; they have the truth of this from Hero; they ſeem to pity the lady; it ſeems her affections have the full bent. Love me! why it muſt be requited: I hear how I am cenſured; they ſay I will bear myſelf proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they ſay too, that ſhe will rather die, than give any ſign of affection—I did never think to marry—I muſt not ſeem proud—Happy are they that hear their detractions, and can put them to mending. They ſay the lady is fair—'tis a truth, I can bear them witneſs—And virtuous—'Tis ſo, I cannot reprove it. And wiſe, but for loving me—By my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly; for I will be horribly in love with her—I may chance to have ſome odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, becauſe I have rail'd ſo long againſt marriage. But doth not the appetite alter? A man loves the meat in his youth, that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and ſentences, and theſe paper bullets of the brain, awe a man from the career of his humour? No: the world muſt be peopled. When I ſaid I would die a batchelor, I did not think I ſhould live till I were marry'd. Here comes Beatrice. By this day, ſhe's a fair lady, I do ſpy ſome marks of love in her.

Enter Beatrice.

Beat. Againſt my will, I am ſent to bid you come in to dinner.

Bene. Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

Beat. I took no more pains for thoſe thanks, than you take pains to thank me; if it had been painful, I would not have come.

Bene. You take pleaſure, then, in the meſſage?

Beat. Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's point, and choak a daw withal. You have no stomach, signior. Fare you well. [*Exit.*

Bene. Ha! How's this! Against my will, I am sent to bid you come in to dinner: there's a double meaning in that. I took no more pains for those thanks, than you took pains to thank me. That's as much as to say, any pains that I take for you, is as easy as thanks. If I do not take pity of her, I am a villain; if I do not love her, I am a Jew. I will go get her picture. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE *continues in the Garden.*

Enter Hero, Margaret, *and* Ursula.

Hero. GOOD Margaret, run thee into the parlour,
There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice;
Whisper her ear, and tell her, I and Ursula
Walk in the orchard, and our whole discourse
Is all of her. Say that thou overheard'st us,
And bid her steal into the pleached bower,
To listen to our purpose. This is thy office;
Bear thee well in it, and leave us alone.

Marg. I'll make her come, I warrant, presently. [*Exit.*

Hero. Now, Ursula, when Beatrice doth come,
As we do trace this alley up and down,
Our talk must only be of Benedick;
When I do name him, let it be thy part
To praise him more than ever man did merit.
My talk to thee, must be how Benedick
Is sick in love with Beatrice. Of this matter
Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made,
That only wounds by hear-say. Now begin;

Enter Beatrice.

For look where Beatrice, like a lapwing runs,
Close by the ground, to hear our conference.
The pleasant'st angling, is to see the fish
Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,
And greedily devour the treacherous bait.

Ursu. Fear you not my part of the dialogue.

Hero. Then go we near her, that her ear lose nothing
Of the false sweet bait that we lay for it.
No, truly, Ursula, she's too disdainful;
I know her spirits are as coy and wild,
As haggards of the rock.

Ursu. But are you sure
That Benedick loves Beatrice so intirely?

Hero. So says the prince, and my new-trothed lord.

Ursu. They did intreat me to acquaint her of it;
But I persuaded them, if they lov'd Benedick,
To wish him wrestle with affection,
And never to let Beatrice know of it.

Ursu. Why did you so? Doth not the gentleman
Deserve as full, as fortunate a bed,
As ever Beatrice shall couch upon?

Hero. O god of love! I know he doth deserve
As much as may be yielded to a man;
But nature never fram'd a woman's heart
Of prouder stuff, than that of Beatrice.
Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
Misprizing what they look on; and her wit
Values itself so highly, that to her
All matter else seems weak. She cannot love,
Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
She is so self-endear'd.

Ursu. Sure I think so;
And therefore, certainly it were not good
She knew his love, lest she make sport at it.

Hero. Why, you speak truth. I never yet saw man,
How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featur'd,
But she would spell him backward: if fair-fac'd,
She'd swear the gentleman should be her sister;
If black, why nature, drawing of an antick,
Made a foul blot; if tall, a lance ill-headed;
If low, an aglet very vilely cut;
If speaking, why, a vane, blown with all winds;
If silent, why, a block, moved with none.
So turns she every man the wrong side out,
And never gives to truth and virtue that
Which simpleness and merit purchaseth.

Ursu. Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable.

Hero. But who dare tell her so? If I should speak,
She'd mock me into air; O, she would laugh me
Out of myself; press me to death with wit.
Therefore, let Benedick, like cover'd fire,
Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly;
It were a bitter death to die with mocks.

Ursu. Yet tell her of it; hear what she will say.

Hero. No, rather I will go to Benedick,
And counsel him to fight against his passion.
And, truly, I'll devise some honest slanders
To stain my cousin with. One doth not know
How much an ill word may impoison liking.

Ursu. O, do not do your cousin such a wrong.
She cannot be so much without true judgment,
(Having so sweet and excellent a wit,
As she is priz'd to have) as to refuse
So rare a gentleman as Benedick.

Hero. Indeed he hath an excellent good name.

Ursu. His excellence did earn it, ere he had it.
When are you married, Madam?

Hero. Why, every day, to-morrow. Come, go in,
I'll shew thee some attires, and have thy counsel
Which is the best to furnish me, to-morrow.

Ursu. She's ta'en, I warrant you; we have caught her, Madam.

Hero. If it prove so, then loving goes by haps;
Some Cupids kill with arrows, some with traps.
[*Exeunt.*

Beat. What fire is in my ears? Can this be true?
Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?
Contempt, farewel, and maiden pride adieu!
No glory lives behind the back of such,
And, Benedick, love on, I will requite thee;
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand.
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee;
Love as thou wilt, Beatrice shall requite thee.
[*Exit.*

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, *and* Leonato.

Pedro. I do but stay till your marriage be consummate, and then I go toward Arragon.

Claud. I'll bring you thither, my lord, if you'll vouchsafe me.

Pedro. Nay, I will only be bold with Benedick for his company; for, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, he is all mirth. He hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string, and the little hangman dare not shoot at him: he hath a heart as sound as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper; for what his heart thinks, his tongue speaks.

Bene. Gallants, I am not as I have been.

Leon. So say I; methinks you are sadder.

Claud. I hope he is in love.

Pedro. Hang him, truant, there's no true drop of blood in him, to be truly touch'd with love; if he be sad, he wants money.

Bene. I have the tooth-ach.

Pedro. Draw it.

Bene. Hang it

Pedro. What! ſigh for the tooth-ach?

Leon. Which is but a humour, or a worm.

Bene. Well, every one can maſter a grief, but he that has it.

Claud. Yet ſay I, he is in love. If he be not in love with ſome woman, there is no believing old ſigns. He bruſhes his hat a mornings; what ſhould that bode?

Pedro. Nay, he rubs himſelf with civit; can you ſmell him out, by that?

Claud. That's as much as to ſay, the ſweet youth's in love.

Pedro. The greateſt note of it is his melancholy.

Claud. Nay, but his jeſting ſpirit, which is now crept into a lute-ſtring.

Pedro. Indeed, that tells a heavy tale for him. Conclude he is in love.

Claud. Nay, but I know who loves him.

Pedro. That would I know, too. I warrant, one that knows him not.

Claud. Yes, and his ill conditions; and in deſpight of all, dies for him.

Pedro. Indeed! ſhe ſhall be buried with her heels upwards.

Bene. Yet this is no charm for the tooth-ach.—Old ſignior, walk aſide with me, I have ſtudied eight or nine wiſe words to ſpeak to you, which theſe hobby-horſes muſt not hear. [*Exit with* Leon.

Pedro. For my life, to break with him about Beatrice.

Claud. 'Tis even ſo. Hero and Margaret have, by this, play'd their parts with Beatrice; and then the two bears will not bite one another when they meet.

Enter Don John.

John. My lord and brother, Heav'n ſave you.

Pedro. Good den, brother.

John. If you're leiſure ſerv'd, I would ſpeak with you.

Pedro. In private?

John. If it pleaſe you: yet, Count Claudio may hear, for what I would ſpeak of concerns him.

Pedro. What's the matter?

John. Means your lordſhip to be married to-morrow? [*To* Claudio.

Pedro. You know he does.

John. I know not that, when he knows what I know.

Claud. If there be any impediment, I pray you diſcover it.

John. You may think I love you not; let that appear hereafter, and aim better at me by that I now will manifeſt; for my brother, I think, he holds you well, and in dearneſs of heart, hath holp to effect your enſuing marriage: ſurely, ſuit ill ſpent, and labour ill beſtow'd.

Pedro. Why, what's the matter?

John. I came hither to tell you, and circumſtances ſhorten'd, (for ſhe hath been too long a talking of) the lady is diſloyal.

Claud. Who, Hero?

John. Even ſhe, Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero!

Claud. Diſloyal?

John. The word is too good to paint out her wickedneſs; I could ſay ſhe were worſe. Think you of a worſe title, and I will fit her to it. Wonder not, till further warrant. Go but with me, to-night, and you ſhall ſee her chamber-window enter'd, even the night before her wedding-day; if you love her, then to-morrow wed her; but it would better fit your honour to change your mind.

Claud. May this be ſo?

Pedro. I will not think it.

John. If you dare not truſt that you ſee, confeſs not that you know. If you will follow me, I will ſhew you enough; and when you have ſeen more, and heard more, proceed accordingly.

Claud. If I ſee any thing, to-night, why I ſhould not marry her, to-morrow, in the congregation where I ſhould wed, there will I ſhame her.

Pedro. And as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee to diſgrace her.

John. I will diſparage her no farther, till you are my witneſſes; bear it coldly but till night, and let the iſſue ſhew itſelf. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE, *the Street.*

Enter Dogberry *and* Verges, *with the Watch.*

Dogb. Are you good men and true?

Verg. Yea, or elſe it were pity but they ſhould ſuffer ſalvation, body and ſoul.

Dogb. Nay, that were a puniſhment too good for them, if they ſhould have an allegiance in them; being choſen for the prince's watch.

Verg. Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogberry.

Dogb. Firſt, who think you the moſt diſartleſs man to be conſtable?

1 *Watch.* Hugh Oatcake, Sir, or George Seacoal; for they can write and read.

Dogb. Come hither, neighbour Seacoal. Heav'n hath bleſt you with a good name: to be a well-favour'd man is the gift of fortune, but to write and read, comes by nature.

2 *Watch.* Both which, maſter conſtable——

Dogb. You have.

2 *Watch.* I have.

Dogb. I knew it would be your anſwer. Well, for your favour, Sir, why, give Heav'n thanks, and make no boaſt of it; and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of ſuch vanity. You are thought, here, to be the moſt ſenſeleſs and fit man for the conſtable of the watch, therefore bear you the lanthorn: this is your charge; you ſhall comprehend all vagrom men; you are to bid any man ſtand, in the prince's name.

2 *Watch.* How, if he will not ſtand?

Dogb. Why, then, take no note of him, but let him go, and preſently call the reſt of the watch together, and thank Heav'n you are rid of a knave.

Verg. If he will not ſtand when he is bidden, he is none of the prince's ſubjects.

Dogb. True, and they are to meddle with none but the prince's ſubjects. You ſhall alſo make no noiſe in the ſtreets; for the watch to babble and talk, is moſt tolerable, and not to be endur'd.

2 *Watch.* We will rather ſleep, than talk; we know what belongs to a watch.

Dogb. Why, you ſpeak like an ancient and moſt quiet watchman, for I cannot ſee how ſleeping ſhould offend; only have a care that your bills be not ſtolen. Well, you are to call at all the alehouſes, and bid them that are drunk get them to bed.

2 *Watch.* How, if they will not?

Dogb. Why, then, let them alone till they are ſober; if they make you not then the better anſwer, you may ſay, they are not the men you took them for.

2 *Watch.* Well, Sir.

Dogb. If you meet a thief, you may ſuſpect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true man; and for ſuch kind of men, the leſs you meddle or make with them, why the more is for your honeſty.

2 *Watch.* If we know him to be a thief, ſhall we not lay hands on him?

Dogb. Truly, by your office you may; but I think

they that touch pitch, will be defil'd; the moſt peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is to let him ſhew himſelf what he is, and ſteal out of your company.

Verg. You have been always call'd a merciful man, partner.

Dogb. Truly I would not hang a dog, by my will, much more a man who hath any honeſty in him.

Verg. If you hear a child cry in the night, you muſt call to the nurſe, and bid her ſtill it.

2 *Watch.* How if the nurſe be aſleep, and will not hear us?

Dogb. Why, then, depart in peace, and let the child wake her with crying: for a ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baes, will never anſwer a calf when he bleats.

Verg. 'Tis very true.

Dogb. This is the end of the charge. You, conſtable, are to preſent the prince's own perſon; if you meet the prince in the night, you may ſtay him.

Verg. Nay, by'r lady, that I think he cannot.

Dogb. Five ſhillings to one on't, with any man that knows the ſtatutes, he may ſtay him; marry, not without the prince be willing: for, indeed, the watch ought to offend no man; and it is an offence to ſtay a man againſt his will.

Verg. By'r lady, I think it be ſo.

Dogb. Ha, ha, ha! Well, maſters, good night; an there be any matter of weight chances, call me up; keep your fellows council and your own, and good night.—Come, neighbour.

2 *Watch.* Well, maſters, we hear our charge; let us go ſit here, upon the church-bench, till two, and then all to bed.

Dogb. One word more, honeſt neighbours. I pray you, watch about Signior Leonato's door, for the wedding being there to-morrow, there is a great coil, to-night. Adieu; be vigilant, I beſeech you. [*Exeunt* Dogb. *and* Verg.

Enter Borachio *and* Conrade.

Bora. What, Conrade!

1 *Watch.* Peace, ſtir not. [*Aſide.*

Bora. Conrade, I ſay.

Conr. Here, man, I am at thy elbow.

Bora. Stand near me, and I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee.

1 *Watch.* Some treaſon, maſters; yet ſtand cloſe.

Bora. Therefore, know, I have earned of Don John a thouſand ducats.

Conr. Is it poſſible that any villainy ſhould be ſo dear?

Bora. Thou ſhould'ſt rather aſk if it were poſſible any villainy ſhould be ſo cheap! for when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.

Conr. I wonder at it.

Bora. That ſhews thou art unconfirm'd; thou knoweſt that the faſhion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man.

Conr. Yes, it is apparel.

Bora. I mean the faſhion.

Conr. Yes, the faſhion is the faſhion.

Bora. Tuſh, I may as well ſay, the fool's the fool. But ſeeſt thou not what a deformed thief this faſhion is?

1 *Watch.* I know that Deformed; he has been a vile thief, this ſeven years; he goes up and down, like a gentleman. I remember his name.

Bora. Didſt thou not hear ſomebody?

Conr. No, 'twas the vane on the houſe.

Bora. Seeſt thou not, I ſay, what a deformed thief, this faſhion is? how giddily he turns about all the hot bloods, between fourteen and five and thirty.

Conr. Art not thou, thyſelf, giddy with the faſhion, that thou haſt ſhifted out of thy tale, into telling me of the faſhion?

Bora. Not ſo, neither. But know, that I have to-night, woo'd Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero. She leans me out at her miſtreſs's chamber-window; bids me a thouſand times good night——I tell this tale, vilely—— I ſhould firſt tell thee how the prince, Claudio, and my maſter, planted, and placed, and poſſeſſed by my maſter, Don John, ſaw far off in the orchard, this amiable encounter.

Conr. And thought they Margaret was Hero?

Bora. Two of them did, the prince and Claudio; but the devil, my maſter, knew ſhe was Margaret. Away went Claudio enraged, ſwore he would meet her, as he was appointed next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, ſhame her with what he ſaw o'er night, and ſend her home again without a huſband.

1 *Watch.* We charge you, in the prince's name, ſtand.

2 *Watch.* Call up the right maſter conſtable; we have here recovered the moſt dangerous piece of lechery, that ever was known in the common-wealth.

1 *Watch.* And one Deformed is one of them: I know him, he wears a lock.

Conr. Maſters, maſters.

2 *Watch.* You'll be made bring Deformed forth, I warrant you.

Conr. Maſters————

1 *Watch.* Never ſpeak, we charge you, let us obey you to go with us.

Bora. We are like to prove a goodly commodity, being taken up of theſe men's bills. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE, Leonato's *Houſe.*

Enter Hero *and* Margaret.

Marg. Troth, I think your other dreſs were better.

Hero. No, pray thee, good Meg, I'll wear this.

Marg. By my troth, it's not ſo good, and I warrant your couſin will ſay ſo.

Hero. My couſin's a fool, and thou art another. I'll wear none but this.

Marg. I like the new tire within excellently, and your gown's a moſt rare faſhion, i'faith. I ſaw the ducheſs of Milan's gown that they praiſe ſo; but for a fine, graceful, and excellent faſhion, yours is worth ten on't.

Hero. God give me joy to wear it, for my heart is exceeding heavy.

Marg. 'Twill be heavier ſoon, by the weight of a huſband.

Hero. Fie upon thee, art not aſham'd?

Enter Beatrice.

Hero. Good morrow, coz.

Beat. Good morrow, ſweet Hero.

Hero. Why, how now? Do you ſpeak in the ſick tune?

Beat. I am out of other tune, methinks. 'Tis almoſt five o'clock, couſin; 'tis time you were ready. By my troth, I am exceeding ill; hey ho!

Marg. For a hawk, a horſe, or a huſband?

Beat. By my troth, I am ſick.

Marg. Get you ſome of this diſtill'd *carduus benedictus*, and lay it to your heart; it is the only thing for a qualm.

Beat. Benedictus! Why *benedictus?* You have ſome moral in this *benedictus.*

Marg. Moral! No, by my troth, I have no moral meaning; I meant plain holy-thiſtle. You may think, perchance, that I think you are in love; nay, by'r lady, I am not ſuch a fool to think what I liſt; nor I liſt not to think what I can; nor in-

deed I cannot think, if I would think my heart out with thinking, that you are in love, or that you will be in love, or that you can be in love: yet Benedick was such another, and now is he become a man; he swore he would never marry, and yet now, in despight of his heart, he eats his meat without grudging; and how you may be converted, I know not, but methinks you look with your eyes as other women do.

Beat. What pace is this thy tongue keeps?

Marg. Not a false gallop.

Enter Ursula.

Ursu. Madam, withdraw; the prince, the count, Signior Benedick, Don John, and all the gallants of the town, are come to fetch you to church.

Hero. Help me to dress me, good coz, good Meg, good Ursula. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Leonato, *with* Dogberry *and* Verges.

Leon. What would you with me, honest neighbour?

Dogb. Marry, Sir, I would have some confidence with you, that decerns you nearly.

Leon. Brief, I pray you, for you see 'tis a busy time with me.

Dogb. Marry, this it is, Sir.

Verg. Yes, in truth it is, Sir.

Leon. What is it, my good friends?

Dogb. Goodman Verges, Sir, speaks a little of the matter; an old man, Sir, and his wits are not so blunt, as God help I would desire they were; but, in faith, as honest as the skin between his brows.

Verg. Yes, I thank Heaven, I am as honest as any man living, that is an old man, and no honester than I.

Dogb. Comparisons are odorous, palabras, neighbour Verges.

Leon. Neighbours, you are tedious.

Dogb. It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor duke's officers; but truly, for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all to your worship.

Leon. All thy tediousness on me, ha?

Dogb. Yea, and twice a thousand times more than 'tis, for I hear as good exclamation on your worship as of any man in the city; and though I be but a poor man, I am glad to hear it.

Verg. And so am I.

Leon. I would fain know what you have to say.

Verg. Marry, Sir, our watch, to-night, excepting your worship's presence, hath ta'en a couple as arrant knaves as any in Messina.

Dogb. A good old man, Sir; he will be talking, as they say; when the age is in, the wit is out. Heaven help us, it is a world to see: well said, i'faith, neighbour Verges; well, he's a good man; an two men ride an horse, one must ride behind; an honest soul, i'faith, Sir, by my troth he is, as ever broke bread; but Heaven is to be worshipp'd; all men are not alike, alas, good neighbour!

Leon. Indeed, neighbour, he comes too short of you.

Dogb. Gifts that Heaven gives.

Leon. I must leave you.

Dogb. One word, Sir; our watch have, indeed, comprehended two auspicious persons, and we would have them this morning examin'd before your worship.

Leon. Take their examination yourself, and bring it me; I am now in great haste, as may appear unto you.

Dogb. It shall be suffigance.

Leon. Drink some wine, ere you go: fare you well. [*Exit* Leon.

Dogb. Go, good partner, go, get you to Francis Seacoal, bid him bring his pen and inkhorn to the jail; we are now to examine those men.

Verg. And we must do it wisely.

Dogb. We will spare for no wit, I warrant; here's that shall drive some of them to a non-come. Only get the learned writer to set down our excommunication, and meet me at the jail. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE, *a Church.*

Don Pedro, Don John, Leonato, Friar, Claudio, Benedick, Hero, Beatrice, *&c. discovered.*

Leon. COME, Friar Francis, be brief, only to the plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards.

Friar. You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady?

Claud. No.

Leon. To be marry'd to her, friar; you come to marry her.

Friar. Lady, you come hither to be married to this Count.

Hero. I do.

Friar. If either of you know any inward impediment, why you should not be conjoin'd, I charge you, on your souls, to utter it.

Claud. Know you any, Hero?

Hero. None, my lord.

Friar. Know you any, count?

Leon. I dare make his answer, none.

Claud. O what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily do!

Bene. How now! Interjections!

Claud. Stand thee by, friar: father, by your leave,
Will you, with free and unconstrained soul,
Give me this maid your daughter?

Leon. As freely, son, as God did give her me.

Claud. And what have I to give you back, whose worth
May counterpoise this rich and precious gift?

Pedro. Nothing, unless you render her again.

Claud. Sweet Prince, you teach me noble thankfulness:
There, Leonato, take her back again;
She's but the sign and semblance of her honour:
Behold, how like a maid she blushes here!
O, what authority and shew of truth,
Can cunning sin cover itself withal!
She knows the heat of a luxurious bed;
Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.

Leon. What do you mean, my Lord?

Claud. Not to be marry'd;
Not knit my soul to an approved wanton.

Leon. Dear my lord, if you
Have mave defeat of her virginity——

Claud. No, Leonato,
I never attempted her with word too large,
But as a brother to his sister, shew'd
Bashful sincerity, and comely love.

Hero. And seem'd I ever otherwise to you?

Claud. Out on thy seeming, I will write against it;
You seem to me as Dian in her orb,
As chaste as is the bud, ere it be blown:
But you are more intemperate in your blood,
Than Venus, or those pamper'd animals
That rage in savage sensuality.

Hero. Is my lord well, that he doth speak so wide?

Leon. Sweet prince, why speak not you?

Pedro. What shall I speak?

I ſtand diſhonour'd, that have gone about
To link my dear friend to a common ſtale.
Leon. Are theſe things ſpoken, or do I but dream?
John. Sir, they are ſpoken, and theſe things are true.
Bene. This looks not like a nuptial.
Hero. True! O Heav'n!
Claud. Leonato, ſtand I here?
Is this the prince? Is this the prince's brother?
Is this face Hero's? Are our eyes our own?
Leon. All this is ſo; but what of this, my lord?
Claud. Let me but move one queſtion to your daughter,
And by that fatherly and kindly power,
That you have in her, bid her anſwer truly.
Leon. I charge thee do ſo, as thou art my child.
Hero. O Heav'n defend me, how am I beſet!
What kind of catechizing call you this?
Claud. To make you anſwer truly to your name.
Hero. Is it not Hero? Who can blot that name
With any juſt reproach?
Claud. Marry, that can Hero;
Hero herſelf can blot out Hero's virtue.
What man was he talk'd with you, yeſternight,
Under your window, betwixt twelve and one?
Now, if you can, anſwer to this.
Hero. I talk'd with no man, at that hour, my lord.
Pedro. Leonato,
I am ſorry you muſt hear; upon mine honour,
Myſelf, my brother, and this grieved Count,
Did ſee her, hear her, at that hour, laſt night,
Talk with a ruffian, at her chamber-window,
Who hath indeed, moſt like a liberal villain,
Confeſs'd the vile encounters they have had,
A thouſand times, in ſecret.
John. Fie, fie, they are not to be nam'd, my lord,
Not to be ſpoken of;
There is not chaſtity enough in language,
Without offence, to utter them—Thus, pretty lady,
I am ſorry for thy much miſgovernment.
Claud. O Hero! what an angel hadſt thou been,
If half thy outward graces had been plac'd
About the thoughts and counſels of thy heart?
But, fare thee well, moſt foul, moſt fair!
For thee I'll lock up all the gates of love,
And on my eyelids ſhall conjecture hang,
To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm,
And never ſhall it more be gracious.
Leon. Hath no man's dagger here a point for me?
[Hero *faints.*
Bene. Look to the lady.
Beat. Why how now, couſin; wherefore ſink you down?
John. Come, let us go; theſe things come thus to light,
Smother her ſpirits up.
[*Exeunt* Don Pedro, Don John, *and* Claud.
Bene. How doth the lady?
Beat. Dead, I think; help, uncle!
Hero! why, Hero! uncle! Signior Benedick! friar!
Leon. O fate! take not away thy heavy hand;
Death is the faireſt cover for her ſhame,
That may be wiſh'd for.
Beat. How now, couſin Hero?
Friar. Have comfort, lady.
Leon. Doſt thou look up?
Friar. Yea, wherefore ſhould ſhe not?
Leon. Wherefore? why doth not every earthly thing
Cry ſhame upon her? could ſhe here deny
The ſtory that is printed in her blood?
Griev'd I, I had but one?
Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame?
I've one too much, by thee.
Oh! ſhe is fall'n
Into a pit of ink, that the wide ſea
Hath drops too few to waſh her clean again.
Bene. Sir, Sir, be patient;
For my part, I am ſo attir'd in wonder,
I know not what to ſay.
Beat. O, on my ſoul, my couſin is belied.
Bene. Lady, were you her bedfellow laſt night?
Beat. No truly, not; altho', until laſt night,
I have this twelvemonth been her bedfellow.
Leon. Confirm'd, confirm'd! O, that is ſtronger made,
Which was before barr'd up with ribs of iron.
Would the prince lye? and Claudio, would he lye?
Who lov'd her ſo, that, ſpeaking of her foulneſs,
Waſh'd it with tears? Hence, from her, let her die.
Friar. Hear me, a little;
For I have only ſilent been ſo long,
And given way unto this courſe of fortune,
By noting of the lady. I have mark'd
A thouſand blushing apparitions
To ſtart into her face; a thouſand innocent ſhames,
In angel whiteneſs, bear away thoſe bluſhes;
And in her eye there hath appear'd a fire,
To burn the errors that theſe princes hold
Againſt her maiden truth. Call me a fool,
Truſt not my reading, nor my obſervation,
My reverence, calling, nor divinity,
If this ſweet lady lie not guiltleſs here,
Under ſome biting error.
Leon. Friar, it cannot be:
Thou ſeeſt that all the grace that ſhe hath left,
Is, that ſhe will not add to her damnation,
A ſin of perjury: ſhe nnt denies it;
Why ſeek'ſt thou then to cover with excuſe,
That which appears in proper nakedneſs?
Friar. Lady, what man is he you are accus'd of?
Hero. They know that do accuſe me, I know none:
If I know more of any man alive,
Than that which maiden modeſty doth warrant,
Let all my ſins lack mercy! O, my father,
Prove you that any man with me convers'd,
At hours unmeet, or that I, yeſternight,
Maintain'd the change of words with any creature,
Refuſe me, hate me, torture me to death.
Friar. There is ſome ſtrange miſpriſion in the princes.
Bene. Two of them have the very bent of honour,
And if their wiſdoms be miſled in this,
The practice of it lives in John the Baſtard,
Whoſe ſpirits toil in frame of villainies.
Leon. I know not: if they ſpeak but truth of her,
Theſe hands ſhall tear her; if they wrong her honour,
The proudeſt of them ſhall well hear of it.
Friar. Pauſe awhile,
And let my counſel ſway you in this caſe.
Your daughter, Lady Hero, left for dead;
Let her awhile be ſecretly kept in,
And publiſh it that ſhe is dead indeed.
Leon. What ſhall become of this? What will this do?
Friar. Marry, this well carry'd, ſhall, on her behalf,
Change ſlander to remorſe; that is ſome good,
But not for that dream I on this ſtrange courſe,
But on this travail look for greater birth:
And ſhe thus dying,
Upon the inſtant that ſhe was accus'd,
Shall be lamented, pity'd, and excus'd,
Of ev'ry hearer; ſo will it fare with Claudio.
Bene. Good Leonato, let the friar adviſe you:
And though you know my inwardneſs and love
Is very much unto the prince and Claudio,
Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this,

As secretly and justly, as your soul
Should with your body.

Leon. Being that I flow in grief,
The smallest twine may lead me.

Friar. 'Tis well consented, presently away.
A grievous wound requires a desperate cure.
Come, lady, die to live; this wedding-day,
Perhaps, is but prolong'd; have patience, and endure. [*Exeunt.*

Manent Benedick *and* Beatrice.

Bene. Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

Beat. Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

Bene. I will not desire that.

Beat. You have no reason, I do it freely.

Bene. Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wrong'd.

Beat. Ah, how much might the man deserve of me that would right her!

Bene. Is there any way to shew such friendship?

Beat. A very even way, but no such friend.

Bene. May a man do it?

Beat. It is a man's office, but not yours.

Bene. I do love nothing in the world so well as you; is not that strange?

Beat. As strange as the thing I know not; it were as possible for me to say, I loved nothing so well as you; but believe me not; and yet I lye not; I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing. I am sorry for my cousin.

Bene. By my sword, Beatrice, thou loveſt me.

Beat. Do not swear by it, and eat it.

Bene. I will swear by it, that you love me; and I will make him eat it, that says I love you not.

Beat. Will you not eat your word?

Bene. With no sauce that can be devised to it; I protest I love thee.

Beat. Why, then, Heav'n forgive me.

Bene. What offence, sweet Beatrice?

Beat. You have staid me in a happy hour; I was about to protest I lov'd you.

Bene. And do it, with all thy heart.

Beat. I love you with so much of my heart, that none is left to protest.

Bene. Come, bid me do any thing for thee.

Beat. Kill Claudio.

Bene. Ha! Not for the wide world,

Beat. You kill me to deny; farewel.

Bene. Tarry, sweet Beatrice.

Beat. I am gone, tho' I am here; there is no love in you, nay, I pray you, let me go.

Bene. Beatrice!

Beat. In faith, I will go.

Bene. We'll be friends, first.

Beat. You dare easier be friends with me, than fight with mine enemy.

Bene. Is Claudio thine enemy?

Beat. Is he not approved in the height a villain? that hath slander'd, scorn'd, dishonour'd my kinswoman! O that I were a man! What, bear her in hand, until they come to take hands, and then with public accusation, uncover'd slander, unmitigated rancour.—O, Heaven, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place.

Bene. Hear me, Beatrice.

Beat. Talk with a man out at a window?—a proper saying!

Bene. Nay, but Beatrice.

Beat. Sweet Hero! she is wrong'd, she is slander'd, she is undone,

Bene. But———

Beat. Princes and counts! surely a princely testimony, a goodly count-comfect, a sweet gallant, surely! O that I were a man, for his sake! or that I had any friend would be a man, for my sake! But manhood is melted into courtesies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones, too. He is now as valiant as Hercules, that only tells a lye, and swears it; I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

Bene. Tarry, good Beatrice; by this hand, I love thee.

Beat. Use it, for my love, some other way than swearing by it.

Bene. Think you in your soul the Count Claudio hath wrong'd Hero?

Beat. Yea, as sure as I have a thought or a soul.

Bene. Enough; I am engag'd, I will challenge him. I will kiss your hand, and so leave you; by this hand, Claudio shall render me dear account; as you hear of me, so think of me. Go, comfort your cousin; I must say she's dead; and so, farewel. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Dogberry, Verges, Borachio, Conrade, *the Town-Clerk and Sexton in Gowns.*

To. Cl. Is our whole dissembly appear'd?

Dogb. O, a stool and cushion for the sexton!

Sext. Which be the malefactors?

Verg. Marry, that am I and my partner.

Dogb. Nay, that's certain, we have the exhibition to examine.

Sext. But which are the offenders, that are to be examin'd? Let them come before master town-clerk.

To. Cl. Yea, marry, let them come before me.—What is your name, friend?

Bora. Borachio.

To. Cl. Pray write down Borachio.—Yours, sirrah?

Conr. I am a gentleman, Sir, and my name is Conrade.

To. Cl. Write down, master gentleman Conrade. Masters, do you serve heav'n?

Both. Yea, Sir, we hope.

To. Cl. Write down, that they hope they serve heaven: and write heaven first; for heaven defend, but heav'n should go before such villains—Masters, it is proved already that you are little better than false knaves, and it will go near to be thought so, shortly; how answer you for yourselves?

Conr. Marry, Sir, we say we are none.

To. Cl. A marvellous witty fellow, I assure you, but I will go about with him. Come you hither, sirrah; a word in your ear, Sir; I say to you, it is thought you are false knaves.

Bora. Sir, I say to you, we are none.

To. Cl. Well, stand aside; 'fore heaven they are both in a tale: have you writ down that they are none?

Sext. Master town-clerk, you go not the way to examine; you must call the watch, that are their accusers.

To. Cl. Yea, marry, that's the easiest way; let the watch come forth.—Masters, I charge you in the prince's name, accuse these men.

Enter Watchmen.

1 *Watch.* This man said, Sir, that Don John, the prince's brother, was a villain.

To. Cl. Write down, Prince John a villain; why this is flat perjury, to call a prince's brother villain.

Bora. Master town-clerk.

To. Cl. Pray thee, fellow, peace; I do not like thy look, I promise thee.

Sexton. What heard you him say else?

2 *Watch.* Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats of Don John, for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully.

To. Cl. Flat burglary as ever was committed.

Dogb. Yes, by th' mass, that it is.

Sexton. What else, fellow?

1 *Watch.* And that Count Claudio did mean, upon his words, to disgrace Hero before the whole assembly, and not marry her.

To. Cl. O, villain! thou wilt be condemn'd into everlasting redemption for this.

Sexton. What else?

2 *Watch.* This is all.

Sexton. And this is more, masters, than you can deny. Prince John is this morning secretly stol'n away: Hero was in the manner accus'd, and in this very manner refus'd; and upon the grief of this, suddenly died.——Master constable, let these men be bound and brought to Leonato; I will go before, and shew him their examination. [*Exit.*

Dogb. Come, let them be opinion'd.——Come, bind them. Thou naughty varlet!

Conr. Away, you are an ass, you are an ass.

Dogb. Dost thou not suspect my place? Dost thou not suspect my years? O that he were here to write me down an ass! but, masters, remember that I am an ass, though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass; no, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be prov'd upon thee, by good witness; I am a wise fellow, and which is more, an officer; and which is more, an householder; and which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any in Messina, and one that knows the law; go to; and a rich fellow enough; go to; and a fellow that hath had losses, and one that hath two gowns, and every thing handsome about him. Bring him away. O that I had been writ down an ass! [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE, *before* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Leonato *and* Antonio.

Ant. IF you go on thus, you will kill yourself,
And 'tis not wisdom thus to second grief
Against yourself.

Leon. I pray thee, hold thy peace;
Give not me counsel,
Nor let no comfort e'er delight mine ear,
But such a one whose wrongs doth suit with mine:
Bring me a father that so lov'd his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelm'd like me,
And bid him speak to me of patience;
No, no, 'tis all men's office, to speak patience,
To those that wring under the load of sorrow;
But no man's virtue nor sufficiency
To be so moral, when he shall endure
The like himself; therefore give me no counsel.

Ant. Therein do men from children nothing differ.

Leon. I pray thee, peace; I will be flesh and blood;
For there was never yet philosopher,
That could endure the tooth-ach patiently;
However they have writ the style of gods,
And made a pish at chance and sufferance.

Ant. Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself,
Make those that do offend you suffer too. [*sn.*

Leon. There thou speak'st reason; nay, I will do
My soul doth tell me Hero is belied;
And that shall Claudio know, so shall the prince,
And all of them that thus dishonour her.

Enter Don Pedro *and* Claudio.

Ant. Here come the prince and Claudio, hastily.

Pedro. Good den, good den.

Claud. Good day to both of you.

Leon. Hear you, my lords!

Pedro. We have some haste, Leonato.

Leon. Some haste, my lord! well, fare you well, my lord.
Are you so hasty, now? Well, all is one.

Pedro. Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man.

Ant. If he could right himself with quarreling,
Some of us would lie low.

Claud. Who wrongs him, Sir?

Leon. Marry, thou dost wrong me, thou dissembler thou!
Nay, never lay thy hand upon thy sword,
I fear thee not.

Claud. Marry, beshrew my hand,
If it should give your age such cause of fear;
In faith, my hand meant nothing to my sword.

Leon. Tush, tush, man, never fleer and jest at me;
I speak not like a dotard, nor a fool,
As under privilege of age to brag
What I have done being young, or what would do
Were I not old: know, Claudio, to thy head,
Thou hast so wrong'd my innocent child and me,
That I am forc'd to lay my reverence by,
And with grey hairs and bruise of many days,
Do challenge thee to trial of a man;
I say, thou hast belied my innocent child,
Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,
And she lies bury'd with her ancestors;
O, in a tomb where never scandal slept,
Save this of her's, fram'd by thy villainy!

Claud. My villainy!

Leon. Thine, Claudio; thine, I say.

Pedro. You say not right, old man.

Leon. My lord, my lord,
I'll prove it on his body, if he dare;
Despight his nice fence, and his active practice,
His May of youth, and bloom of lustihood.

Claud. Away, I will not have to do with you.

Leon. Canst thou so daffe me? Thou hast kill'd my child;
If thou kill'st me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.

Ant. He shall kill two of us, and men indeed;
But that's no matter, let him kill one first;
Win me and wear me, let him answer me.
Come, follow me, boy, follow me:
I'll whip you from your foining fence;
Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.

Leon. Brother——

Ant. Content yourself; Heav'n knows I lov'd my niece,
And she is dead, slander'd to death by villains,
That dare as well answer a man, indeed,
As I dare take a serpent by the tongue!
Boys, apes, braggarts, jacks, milksops!

Leon. Brother Anthony!

Ant. Hold you content: what, man! I know them, yea,
And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple:
Scrambling, out-facing, fashion-mongering boys,
That lye, and cog, and flout, deprave and slander,
And speak of half a dozen dangerous words,
How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst;
And this is all.

Leon. But, brother Anthony!

Ant. Come, 'tis no matter,
Do not you meddle; let me deal in this.

Pedro. Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience.
My heart is sorry for your daughter's death;
But, on my honour, she was charg'd with nothing

But what was true, and very full of proof.

Leon. My lord, my lord———

Pedro. I will not hear you.

Leon. No! come, brother, away; I will be heard.

Ant. And shall, or some of us will smart for it.

[*Exeunt both.*

Enter Benedick.

Pedro. See, see, here comes the man we went to seek.

Claud. Now, signior, what news?

Bene. Good day, my lord.

Pedro. Welcome, signior; you are almost come to part almost a fray.

Claud. We had like to have had our two noses snapt off, by two old men without teeth.

Pedro. Leonato and his brother; what think'st thou? Had we fought, I doubt we should have been too young for them.

Bene. In a false quarrel there is no true valour: I came to seek you both.

Claud. We have been up and down to seek thee, for we are high-proof melancholy, and would fain have it beaten away: wilt thou use thy wit?

Bene. It is in my scabbard; shall I draw it?

Claud. I will bid thee draw, as we do the minstrels; draw to pleasure us.

Pedro. As I am an honest man, he looks pale: art thou sick, or angry?

Claud. What! courage, man; what tho' care kill'd a cat, thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.

Bene. Sir, I shall meet your wit in the career, if you charge it against me. I pray you, chuse another subject. I don't like it.

Pedro. By this light, he changes more and more: I think he be angry, indeed.

Claud. If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle.

Bene. Shall I speak a word in your ear?

Claud. Bless me from a challenge!

Bene. You are a villain; I jest not. I will make it good, how you dare, and what you dare, and when you dare. Do me right, or I will protest your cowardice. You have kill'd a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you. Let me hear from you.

Claud. Well, I will meet you, so I may have good chear.

Pedro. What, a feast?

Claud. I'faith, I thank him, he hath bid me to a calf's-head; the which if I do not carve most curiously, say my knife's naught.

Bene. Sir, your wit ambles well, it goes easily.

Pedro. But when shall we set the savage bull's horns on the sensible Benedick's head?

Claud. Yea, and text underneath, "Here dwells Benedick, the married man."

Bene. Fare you well, boy, you know my mind; I will leave you now, to your gossip-like humour; you break jests, as braggarts do their blades, which, Heav'n be thank'd, hurt not.—My lord, for your many courtesies, I thank you; I must discontinue your company; your brother, the bastard, is fled from Messina; you have among you kill'd a sweet and innocent lady. For my lord lack-beard there, he and I shall meet; and till then, peace be with him!

[*Exit* Benedick.

Pedro. He is in earnest.

Claud. In most profound earnest; and, I'll warrant you, for the love of Beatrice.

Pedro. And hath challeng'd thee?

Claud. Most sincerely.

Pedro. What a pretty thing man is, when he goes in his doublet and hose, and leaves off his wit!

Enter Dogberry, Verges, Conrade *and* Borachio *guarded.*

Pedro. But soft you, did he not say my brother was fled?

Dogb. Come, you, Sir, if justice cannot tame you, she shall ne'er weigh more reasons in her balance; nay, if you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be look'd to.

Pedro. How now! two of my brother's men bound? Borachio one!

Claud. Hearken after their offence, my lord.

Pedro. Officers, what offence have these men done?

Dogb. Marry, Sir, they have committed false report; moreover they have spoken untruths; secondarily, they are slanders; sixthly and lastly, they have bely'd a lady; thirdly, they have verify'd unjust things; and to conclude, they are lying knaves.

Pedro. First, I ask thee what they have done; thirdly, I ask thee what's their offence; sixthly and lastly, why they are committed; and to conclude, what you lay to their charge?

Claud. Rightly reason'd, and in his own division.

Pedro. Whom have you offended, masters, that you are thus bound to your answer? This learned constable is too cunning to be understood. What's your offence?

Bora. Sweet prince, let me go no farther to mine answer; do you hear me, and let this count kill me: I have deceived even your very eyes; what your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light, who, in the night, overheard me confessing to this man, how Don John, your brother, incens'd me to slander the lady Hero; how you were brought into the orchard, and saw me court Margaret, in Hero's garment; how you meant to disgrace her, when you should marry her. My villainy they have upon record, which I had rather seal with my death, than repeat over to my shame. The lady is dead, upon mine and my master's false accusation: and, briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

Pedro. Runs not this speech like iron through your blood.

Claud. I have drank poison, while he utter'd it.

Pedro. But did my brother set thee on to this?

Bora. Yea, paid me richly for the practice of it.

Pedro. He is compos'd and fram'd of treachery. And fled he is, upon this villainy.

Claud. Sweet Hero! now thy image doth appear In the rare semblance that I lov'd it first.

Dogb. Come, bring away the plaintiffs. By this time our sexton hath reform'd Signior Leonato of the matter; and, masters, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am an ass.

Verg. Here, here comes master Signior Leonato, and the sexton too.

Enter Leonato, *Sexton, and Servants.*

Leon. Which is the villain? Let me see his eyes, That when I note another man like him, I may avoid him. Which of these is he?

Bora. If you would know your wronger, look on me.

Leon. Art thou, art thou the slave, that with thy breath Hast kill'd mine innocent child?

Bora. Yea, even I alone.

Leon. No, not so, villain, thou bely'st thyself; Here stand a pair of honourable men, A third is fled, that had a hand in it.

I thank you, princes, for my daughter's death;
Record it with your high and worthy deeds;
'Twas bravely done, if you bethink you of it.

Claud. I know not how to pray your patience;
Yet I may speak. Chuse your revenge yourself;
Impose on me what penance your invention
Can lay upon my sin. Yet, I sinn'd not,
But in mistaking.

Pedro. By my soul, nor I;
And yet, to satisfy this good old man,
I would bend under any heavy weight
That he'll enjoin me to.

Leon. You cannot bid my daughter live again;
That were impossible. But, I pray you both,
Possess the people in Messina here,
How innocent she dy'd.
Come you to my house,
And since you could not be my son-in-law,
Be yet my nephew. My brother hath a daughter,
Almost a copy of my child that's dead,
And she alone is heir to both of us.
Give her the right you should have given her cousin,
And so dies my revenge.

Claud. O, noble Sir!
Your over-kindness doth wring tears from me!
I do embrace your offer; and dispose
For henceforth of poor Claudio.

Leon. I will expect your coming.

[*Exit* Pedro. *and* Claud.

This naughty man
Shall face to face be brought to Margaret,
Who, I believe, was pack'd in all this wrong,
Hir'd to it by Don John.

Bora. No, by my soul, she was not;
Nor knew not what she did, when she spoke to me,
But always hath been just and virtuous,
In any thing that I do know by her.

Dogb. Moreover, Sir, which, indeed, is not under white and black, this plaintiff here, the offender, did call me ass; I beseech you, let it be remembered in his punishment; and also, the watch heard them talk of one Deformed; I pray you examine him upon that point.

Leon. I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

Dogb. Your worship speaks like a most thankful and reverend youth; and I praise heav'n for you.

Leon. There's for thy pains.

Dogb. Heav'n save the foundation!

Leon. Go, I discharge thee of thy prisoner; and I thank thee.

Dogb. I leave an errant knave with your worship, which I beseech your worship to correct yourself, for the example of others. Heav'n keep your worship; I wish your worship well. Heav'n restore you to health; I humbly give you leave to depart; and if a merry meeting may be wish'd, Heav'n prohibit it. Come neighbour.

[*Exeunt* Dogberry *and Constable.*

Leon. Bring you these fellows on, we'll talk with Margaret,
How her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE Leonato's *House.*

Enter Benedick *and* Margaret.

Bene. Pray thee, sweet mistress Margaret, deserve well at my hands, by helping me to the speech of Beatrice.

Marg. Will you then write me a sonnet, in praise of my beauty?

Bene. In so high a style, Margaret, that no man living shall come over it; for in most comely truth, thou deservest it.

Marg. To have no man come over me? Why, shall I always keep above stairs?

Bene. Thy wit is as quick as the greyhound's mouth, it catches.

Marg. And yours as blunt as the fencer's foils; which hit, but hurt not.

Bene. A most manly wit, Margaret, it will not hurt a woman; and so I pray thee, call Beatrice.

Marg. Well, I will call Beatrice to you.

[*Exit* Margaret.

Bene. [*Sings.*] *The god of love, that sits above.*
No, I cannot sing; but, for loving, Leander the good swimmer, Troilus, the first employer of pandars, and a whole book full of these quondam carpet-mongers, whose names yet run smoothly in the even road of a blank verse, why, they never were so truly turn'd over and over, as my poor self, in love. Marry, I cannot shew it in rhime; I have try'd, I can find no rhime to *lady*, but *baby*, an innocent's rhime; for *school*, *fool*, a babling rhime; for *scorn*; *born*; a hard rhime; very ominous endings: no, I was not born under a rhiming planet, for I cannot woo in festival terms.

Enter Beatrice.

Sweet Beatrice, wouldst thou come when I call thee?

Beat. Yea, Signior, and depart when you bid me.

Bene. O, stay but till then.

Beat. Then is spoken: fare you well now; and yet, ere I go, let me go with that I came for, which is, with knowing what hath past between you and Claudio.

Bene. Only foul words, and thereupon I will kiss thee.

Beat. Foul words are but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome; therefore I will depart unkiss'd.

Bene. Thou hast frighted the word out of its right sense, so forcible is thy wit; but I must tell thee plainly, Claudio undergoes my challenge, and, either I must shortly hear from him, or I will subscribe him a coward. And I pray thee now tell me, for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me?

Beat. For them all together, which maintain'd so politic a state of evil, that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them. But for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me?

Bene. Suffer love! a good epithet. I do suffer love, indeed, for I love thee against my will.

Beat. In spite of your heart, I think. Alas! poor heart! if you spite it for my sake, I will spite it for yours; for I will never love that which my friend hates.

Bene. Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably.

Beat. It appears not in this confession. There's not one wise man among twenty that will praise himself.

Bene. An old, an old instance, Beatrice, that liv'd in the time of good neighbours. If a man do not erect, in this age, his own tomb, ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monuments than the bells ring and the widow weeps.

Beat. And how long is that, think you?

Bene. Why, an hour in clamour, and a quarter in rheum; therefore, it is most expedient for the wise, if Don Worm (his conscience) find no impediment to the contrary, to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to myself. So much for praising myself, who, I myself will bear witness, is praise-worthy. And now, tell me, how doth your cousin?

Beat. Very ill.

Bene. And how do you.
Beat. Very ill, too.

Enter Urſula.

Bene. Say your prayers, love me, and mend; there will I leave you too, for here comes one in haſte.

Urſu. Madam, you muſt come to your uncle: it is proved my Lady Hero hath been falſely accus'd, the prince and Claudio mightily abus'd, and Don John is the author of all, who is fled and gone.

Beat. Will you go hear this news, Signior?

Bene. I will live in thy eyes, die in thy lap, and be bury'd in thy heart; and moreover, I will go with thee to thy uncle. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE, *a Saloon in* Leonato's *Houſe.*

Enter Leonato, Benedick, Margaret, Urſula, Antonio, Friar, *and* Hero.

Friar. Did not I tell you ſhe was innocent?
Leon. So are the prince and Claudio, who accus'd her,
Upon the error that you heard debated.
But Margaret was in ſome fault for this,
Although againſt her will, as it appears.
Ant. Well; I am glad that all things ſort ſo well.
Bene. And ſo am I, being elſe by faith enforc'd
To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.
Leon. Well, daughter, and you gentlewomen all,
Withdraw into a chamber by yourſelves;
And when I ſend for you, come hither maſk'd.
The prince and Claudio promis'd by this hour
To viſit me.—You know your office, brother;
Yo muſt be father to your brother's daughter,
And give her to young Claudio. [*Exeunt Ladies.*
Ant. Which I will do with confirm'd countenance.
Bene. Friar, I muſt entreat your pains, I think.
Friar. To do what, Signior?
Bene. To bind me, or undo me, one of them.
—Signior Leonato, truth it is, good Signior,
Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.
Leon. That eye my daughter lent her, 'tis moſt true.
Bene. And I do with an eye of love requite her.
Leon. The ſight whereof, I think, you had from me,
From Claudio, and the prince. But what's your will?
Bene. Your anſwer, Sir, is enigmatical;
But for my will, my will is, your good will
May ſtand with ours, this day, to be conjoin'd
I' th' ſtate of honourable marriage,
—In which, good friar, I ſhall deſire your help.
Leon. My heart is with your liking.
Friar. And my help.

Enter Don Pedro *and* Claudio.

Pedro. Hail to this fair aſſembly.
Leon. We here attend you. Are you ſtill determin'd
To marry with my brother's daughter?
Claud. I'll hold my mind, were ſhe an Ethiop.
Leon. Call her forth, brother, here's the friar ready.
Pedro. Good-morrow, Benedick. Why, what's the matter,
That you have ſuch a February face,
So full of froſt, of ſtorm and cloudineſs?
Claud. I think, he thinks upon the ſavage bull.
Tuſh, fear not, man, we'll tip thy horns with gold,
And ſo all Europe ſhall rejoice at thee:
As once Europa did at luſty Jove,
When he would play the noble beaſt in love.
Bene. Bull Jove, Sir, had an amiable low,
And ſome ſuch ſtrange bull leap'd your father's cow,
And got a calf in that ſame noble feat,
Much like to you, for you have juſt his bleat.
O, here they come.

Enter Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, *and* Urſula, *maſk'd.*

Claud. Which is the lady I muſt ſeize upon?
Ant. This ſame is ſhe, and I do give you her.
Claud. Why, then, ſhe's mine. Sweet, let me ſee your face?
Leon. No, that you ſhall not, till you take her hand,
Before this friar, and ſwear to marry her.
Claud. Give me your hand; before this holy friar,
I am your huſband, if you like of me.
Hero. And when I liv'd, I was your other wife.
[*Unmaſking.*
And when you lov'd, you were my other huſband.
Claud. Another Hero?
Hero. Nothing certainer.
One Hero dy'd defil'd, but I do live;
And ſurely, as I live, I am a maid.
Pedro. The former Hero! Hero, that is dead!
Leon. She dy'd, my lord, but whiles her ſlander liv'd.
Friar. All this amazement can I qualify.
When after that the holy rites are ended,
I'll tell thee largely of fair Hero's death:
Meantime, let wonder ſeem familiar,
And to the chapel let us preſently.
Bene. Soft and fair, friar. Which is Beatrice?
Beat. I anſwer to that name. What is your will?
Bene. Do not you love me?
Beat. Why, no; no more than reaſon.
Bene. Why then your uncle, and the prince, and Claudio, have been deceiv'd; they ſwore you did.
Beat. Do not you love me?
Bene. Troth, no; no more than reaſon.
Beat. Why, then my couſin Margaret and Urſula are much deceiv'd; for they did ſwear you did.
Bene. They ſwore you were almoſt ſick for me.
Beat. They ſwore you were well-nigh dead for me.
Bene. 'Tis no matter. Then you do not love me?
Beat. No, truly, but in friendly recompence.
Leon. Come, couſin, I am ſure you love the gentleman.
Claud. And I'll be ſworn upon it, that he loves her;
For here's a paper written in his hand,
A halting ſonnet, of his own pure brain;
Faſhion'd to Beatrice.
Hero. And here's another,
Writ in my couſin's hand, ſtolen from her pocket,
Containing her affection unto Benedick.
Bene. A miracle! here's our own hands againſt our hearts. Come, I will have thee; but, by this light, I take thee for pity.
Beat. I would yet deny you, but, by this good day, I yield upon great perſuaſion, and partly to ſave your life; for, as I was told, you were in a conſumption.
Bene. Peace, I will ſtop your mouth.
Pedro. How doſt thou, Benedick, the married man?
Bene. I'll tell thee what, prince; a college of wit-crackers cannot flout me out of my humour. Doſt thou think I care for a ſatire, or an epigram? No: if a man will be beaten with brains, he ſhall wear nothing handſome about him. In brief, ſince I do purpoſe to marry, I will think nothing to any purpoſe that the world can ſay againſt it: and therefore, never flout at me, for what I have ſaid againſt it; for man is a giddy thing, and this is my concluſion. For thy part, Claudio, I did think to have beaten thee, but in that thou art like to be my kinſman, live unbruis'd, and love my couſin.
Claud. I had well hoped thou wouldſt have denied Beatrice, that I might have cudgell'd thee

Bene. Come, come, we are friends. Let's have a dance, 'ere we are marry'd, that we may lighten our own hearts, and our wives' heels.

Leon. We'll have dancing afterwards.

Bene. Firſt, o' my word; therefore, play muſic. Prince, thou art ſad; get thee a wife, get thee a wife: there is no ſtaff more reverend, than one tipt with horn.

Enter Meſſenger.

Meſſ. My lord, your brother John is ta'en in flight,
And brought, with armed men, back to Meſſina.

Bene. Think not of him till to-morrow: I'll deviſe thee brave puniſhments for him. Strike up, pipers. [*Dance.*

[*Exeunt omnes.*